



AI Will Eat Itself: Why Tech Insiders Are Not Concerned by Accelerating Development

The Myth of AI Inevitability

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into modern life, the dominant public narrative suggests that its total dominance and human replacement are inevitable. However, a growing number of tech insiders are challenging this view, arguing that the current trajectory of AI is neither healthy nor sustainable. Dan Houser, the co-founder of Rockstar Games, compares the current AI boom to Mad Cow disease, suggesting the system is feeding on itself and will eventually become fundamentally unstable. This perspective posits that the flaws appearing in AI models are not temporary bugs but structural limitations that may prevent the technology from ever achieving a total global takeover.

The Mad Cow Analogy and Model Collapse

The comparison to Mad Cow disease stems from the historical fact that the disease spread when cattle were fed the processed remains of other cattle, creating a closed loop of degraded material that led to neurological failure. Houser argues that AI is drifting into a similar pattern by training on synthetic outputs generated by other AI systems rather than on genuine human-created knowledge.

This phenomenon, known among researchers as model collapse, occurs when generative systems are trained repeatedly on AI-created data. Over time, these models become less accurate, less diverse, and increasingly detached from reality. Instead of compounding intelligence, the systems hollow themselves out, reinforcing original errors and flattening the nuances found in human thought.

The Scarcity of High-Quality Training Material

While AI marketing focuses on the scale of data and parameters, tech leaders rarely address the growing scarcity of high-quality, human-generated training material. Because existing models have already ingested much of the open internet, the remaining available data is increasingly polluted by automated noise, spam, and other AI-generated content. Large language models that lack access to a continuous supply of renewed human input—such as art, reasoning, and lived experience—face a serious risk of stagnation or regression. Ironically, as more automated content floods the web, the internet becomes a less reliable source for training future models.

Complexity, Context, and Creative Limits

Critiques of complete AI adoption often highlight that those pushing for total automation prioritize efficiency over a proper understanding of intellectual and cultural costs. In the field of video game development, creators have long observed that while AI can generate dialogue and code snippets, it lacks an internal sense of meaning, motivation, or consequence. These qualities are essential for effective storytelling and world-building. AI is capable of imitating form and predicting what should come next based on patterns, but it fundamentally does not understand the context or the reason why it should come next.

Physical Limits and Hallucinations

The phenomenon of "hallucinations," where AI provides confident but false outputs, serves as a sign that these systems do not possess knowledge in the human sense. Beyond these cognitive errors, AI development is approaching significant physical and economic hurdles, including skyrocketing energy costs and data bottlenecks. Evidence suggests that the strategy of brute-force scaling may be reaching its diminishing returns. Consequently, the fear of a runaway super-intelligence appears less like an imminent threat and more like a distraction from immediate risks, such as cultural homogenization and misinformation.

The Real Risk: Institutional Over-Reliance

The structural weaknesses of AI may serve as a safeguard against catastrophe. Because AI systems degrade when isolated from human input, they cannot become self-sustaining or improve autonomously beyond human control. AI remains parasitic on human creativity and judgment, acting as an amplifier of existing patterns rather than a generator of independent meaning, ethics, or purpose.

The most significant danger is not the technology itself, but how institutions respond to it. Corporations, media organizations, and governments are increasingly treating AI outputs as authoritative despite their uncertain accuracy. This trend threatens to degrade human expertise, accountability, and critical thinking. If AI-generated material becomes the default reference point in law, journalism, or policy, errors could become systemic failures.

Conclusion: Safeguarding Human Judgment

Society must distinguish between automation and wisdom, recognizing that speed does not always equate to progress. The future requires human judgment and creativity, and the danger lies not in AI replacing humanity, but in humans voluntarily surrendering their agency by over-relying on automated models. As some observers note, a machine cannot outperform the inputs provided to it, and even the most advanced systems still require humans for maintenance and repair. Ultimately, while AI is a limited tool, its impact depends on whether we choose to maintain our role as the primary source of meaning and decision-making.

To understand the current state of AI is to recognize it as a reflection in a hall of mirrors: it can create a vast and complex image, but without a human standing in front of it to provide the original form, the reflections eventually fade into a blurred and distorted void.